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~~CIA BUMBLED~~

Where Was the Boss?

The more detractors talk about our unfettered superspy organization, the Central Intelligence Agency, and its director, Allen W. Dulles, the more wondrous we find it to be.

President Kennedy properly is sending Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor and his brother, Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy, to the CIA as sort of unofficial ambassadors to learn what goes on in this never-never land. But in the end, the President must assume the burden of its errors.

The sudden sea of CIA statistics being published is especially enchanting. Payroll estimates range from 5,000 to 30,000 persons. Dulles is reported to have casual authority to sign a million-dollar chit without itemizing, without a squeal from congressional watchdogs, without a raised eyebrow in the Internal Revenue Service.

Only a few years ago, CIA spraddled through makeshift and unidentified Washington hutches. Magician

Dulles rubbed his lamp, and, lo! Under the noses of the nosy sprang up an eight-story, Pentagon-type building, completed with walled yard, set in 140 acres of Potomac real estate. Gone was secrecy—a multi-lane highway led to this mecca for young intellectuals with a gift for languages, travel, jujitsu, gray flannels and cafe intrigue.

One story says only 200 out of 1,000 talented applicants from Eastern universities hurdle the requirements for CIA jobs. Of the 200, another 25 are disqualified by tongues which swivel under the influence of bourbon. Applying this formula to even 20,000 CIA employees, at least 100,000 have been tested by reflex experts and lie detectors to muster the present force.

An intelligence unit always was imagined as a place where stenographers hid all evidence by swallowing their gum wrappers, so hush-hush even the government avoided its sacred shadows. Now CIA, like Oscar-winning Liz Taylor, burns in the limelight because of the boo-boo in Cuba, the blowback from the war in Laos, the U-2 spy plane incident.

President Eisenhower never said publicly he was caught unaware by the U-2 debacle because CIA suddenly was acting on its own. Nor has President Kennedy, launching an investigation of CIA's abilities, admitted it went beyond the information gathering stage and initiated disastrous policy in Cuba and Laos.

It is doubtful, however, that America could scrape up anything like 30,000 capable spies. It is certain this country can't produce that many Ivy League generals responsible to no one.

It is at this point the collision comes. The CIA was organized to gather and evaluate security information, pass it on to the policy makers. In the United States, the initiating of even grass fire shooting wars still is the responsibility of the President and Congress. Has this responsibility been abdicated in the cases of Laos and Cuba?